LOCAL EATS

Fast-casual Mexican food comes to Ann Arbor

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Two brothers from a family of Mexican restauranteurs have struck out on their own with a fast-casual spot near Ann Arbor.

The concept for Dos Hermanos Express, which Alex and Hiram Arreola opened off Jackson Road in March, came together quickly. But it's the product of their upbringing in a family that has owned and operated Mexican markets and restaurants in Michigan for decades.

Their father Reyes and uncle Nicolas Arreola opened Dos Hermanos Market in Ypsilanti in 2007, and the younger Arreola brothers spent years working under their mother Jehieli Luna, who runs Dos Hermanos Westland.

Alex and Hiram took a chance in opening their own location. They had planned a market concept similar to the Mexican grocer, deli and meat markets available at both their parents' businesses, but when the former Moe's Grill space became available in February, they decided to move quickly to set up a fast-casual restaurant with their own vision.

As its name suggests, Dos Hermanos Express focuses on quick service with the same quality ingredients their family has sourced for years. Each morning, the brothers prep their own marinated steak, hand-ground chorizo and fresh guacamole from scratch. They serve their staple meats in tacos, burritos and tortas — authentic Mexican sandwiches.

So far, the most popular sandwich is the Torta Cubana, which comes loaded with thin-cut breaded chicken Milanesa, eggs, ham, chorizo, cheese, a black bean spread, lettuce, tomato, onion, jalapeños, mayo and avocado served on soft telera bread and pressed in a grill.

"Starting from the basics — even the chicken Milanesa — everything is made from scratch," Hiram said, "We make everything here. We try to use top-quality things."

Dos Hermanos also serves authentic street-style tacos, which come on double-stacked corn tortillas with a choice of meat — seasoned carne asada is their signature — garnished with onions and cilantro and served with a side of curtido, a blend of pickled onion and habanero that has quickly become a fan favorite, Alex said.